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SURVEY OF HISTORICAL ACTIVITIES

THE SOCIETY AND THE STATE

During the three months' period ending July 10, 1921, there were twenty-four additions to the membership roll of the State Historical Society. Four of these enrolled as life members, as follows: David True Hackett, Palo Alto, California; Irving E. Hinze, Chicago, Illinois; Michael B. Olbrich, Madison; Harry Sauthoff, Madison.

Seventeen persons became annual members of the Society: Julius C. Birge, St. Louis, Missouri; Samuel Bond, Mondovi; George Brown, Madison; Carl Chandler, Blanchardville; Dr. W. A. Engsberg, Lake Mills; Emma J. Gardner, Milwaukee; William S. Hoffman, Prairie du Chien; Joseph C. Johnson, Blair; Arthur P. Kannenberg, Oshkosh; James J. McDonald, Madison; Alfred K. Nippert, Cincinnati, Ohio; Anita E. North, Hudson; Bernard M. Palmer, Janesville; Mrs. Frederick H. Remington, Milwaukee; Dr. John W. Schempff, Milwaukee; Martha E. Sell, Madison; William W. Sweet, Greencastle, Indiana.

The high schools at Cambridge, Lancaster, and Wausau enrolled as Wisconsin school members.

J. L. Sturtevant, Wausau, changed from annual to life membership.

A Beloit newspaper preserved in the State Historical Library, issued in the month of August, 1862, preserves a report of the death on the field of battle of Lieutenant Frank W. Oakley of the Seventh Wisconsin Regiment of Volunteer Infantry. But newspaper reports sometimes err, particularly in giving news from the field of battle, and so, fortunately, this one did. Mr. Oakley survived, to receive his honorable discharge at the close of the war, minus one arm and plus a commission as major. On June 30, 1921, he terminated almost sixty years of service for the national government. For four years he was a soldier in the Union army; for several years thereafter, postmaster of Beloit. With the organization of the United States District Court for Western Wisconsin in 1870, Major Oakley became its first marshal; this office he continued to fill, with the single exception of the first Cleveland administration, for over a quarter of a century. Since 1897 he has efficiently filled the office of clerk of the same court. While acting as clerk of the court he was appointed by Judge Bunn receiver for the Madison and the Superior street railways, and he served for a time as president of the Madison Street Railway.

For upwards of a third of a century Major Oakley has served as curator of the State Historical Society. Of the members now on the board, only professors Parkinson and Anderson exceed Major Oakley in length of service.

Miss Emma J. Gardner of Milwaukee calls attention to an erroneous statement contained in Professor Fish's article on "An Historical Museum," published in the March, 1921, number of this magazine. The statement in question ascribes to Dr. George W. Peckham credit for founding the Milwaukee Public Museum. According to C. H. Doerflinger, in an address on "The Genesis and Early History of the Wisconsin Natural History Society at Milwaukee," read on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the society, its founder was Peter Engelmann, a German "Forty-eighter" who became principal of the Milwaukee German-English Academy in 1851. The address shows that Dr. Peckham made important scientific contributions to the society.

In the June number of the magazine mention was made of Michael Nippert, a Napoleonic soldier, buried near Baraboo. June 14 the grandson of this man, Judge Alfred K. Nippert of Cincinnati, passed through Madison on his way to visit the family homestead. Judge Nippert was much interested in the work of the Society; he gave us information concerning four generations of his family.

Judge Nippert states that his ancestors were originally French Huguenots, at home near Lyons. After the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, they removed to the neighborhood of Strassburg, where his grandfather, Michael, was born. He was enrolled in Napoleon's army and marched with him to Moscow. On the terrible retreat from that place, which broke Napoleon's power, Nippert and his relative, Michael Herschinger, were among the last to cross the bridge near Moscow, just as the Russians blew up the structure to prevent the French retreat.

At the close of his military service Nippert decided to emigrate to America; he and his family crossed the ocean in the early twenties, went to Pittsburgh, and took the first side-wheel steamboat that went down the Ohio River. The first American home of the Nippert family was in Monroe County, Ohio, near the present town of Powhattan, among the Captina Hills. This was the historic site of the Mingo Indians, and of Chief Logan's home. After several years in Ohio the Nippert family removed to Freeport, Illinois. Thence they came in 1847 by ox team to Sauk County, Wisconsin, and settled just west of Rock Hill cemetery opposite the present Sleutz place. The Herschinger family had preceded them to this place. There the elder Nippert and his wife died, and were buried in this cemetery.

Judge Nippert's father, Louis, had before this last removal left home to enter the ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church. In 1850 he was appointed to go to Germany on a mission. Before leaving, he visited his father's family in Wisconsin. Judge Nippert has in his possession the journal of the journey. The traveler went from Cincinnati to Sandusky by rail in a wood-burning engine, the journey lasting twenty-four hours. From Sandusky he went by boat to Detroit, across Michigan by stage, and again by boat to Milwaukee. He left the latter place by stage for Janesville and Madison. From the latter place he walked to Fort Winnebago, then on to Baraboo along an Indian trail. In the autumn he crossed to Germany, where he remained

a faithful missionary during thirty-six years. During our Civil War the Reverend Louis Nippert helped to interest Swiss and German financiers to purchase United States bonds. He became in time director of the Martin Biblical Institute at Frankfort-on-the-Main. There Mrs. Abraham Lincoln was for a time a guest. In 1886 the Reverend Louis Nippert transferred to the Central German Conference in America. He served as pastor of several churches near Cincinnati and died in that city August 17, 1894.

Several of his brothers served in Wisconsin regiments during the Civil War. Henry was a member of the First Wisconsin Cavalry. Philip Nippert enlisted May 10, 1861, in the Sixth Infantry, part of the Iron Brigade. He was severely wounded at Gainesville and left for dead upon the field. Having been rescued by the burial squad, he was taken to a hospital, recovered, rejoined his regiment, and served until he was mustered out July 15, 1864. Later Philip Nippert removed to Kansas as a homesteader; he died in 1906, during the G. A. R. encampment at Minneapolis.

The fourth generation of the Nippert family served in the World War. Judge Nippert's eldest son, James, was in 1917 one of the youngest commissioned officers of the American Expeditionary Forces.

The surrender of the Winnebago chief Red Bird at the Fox-Wisconsin portage in 1827 has been termed by a well-known historian "the most dramatic scene in early Wisconsin history." This remarkable episode has been made the theme of a musical drama by a Racine teacher, Miss Pearl Richards. "Red Bird" was produced in that city April 15, by a cast of amateurs, and attained a deserved success. For the musical numbers the works of Charles W. Cadman, Thurlow Lieurance, and Amy Woodforde-Finden, noted students of Indian music, were utilized. The rollicking soldier song "Benny Havens Oh" was introduced with much effect. By the coöperation of the Wisconsin Traveling Library and Study Club information concerning the origin of this song was obtained from the librarian at West Point.

The drama is written in blank verse, partly in the *Hiawatha* meter, traditionally considered suitable for Indian subjects. The play itself is worked out on traditional lines, such as those of Cooper and Longfellow, and is less true to aboriginal psychology than Leonard's *Glory of the Morning*. Nevertheless, Miss Richard's work is to be commended for its fidelity to the historic background, for many lines of strong dramatic expression, and for the utilization of a story that is of especial interest to lovers of Wisconsin history. The setting of the first three acts is the old Dekorra village west of Baraboo. The scenes vividly portray the Indian standards of honor and of courage, according to which Red Bird, always the friend of the whites, was bound in honor to avenge the death of his kindred by massacring a family of white people. Then when he finds he has been deceived—that his brothers still live—that his act of vengeance has aroused the United States army to advance against his tribesmen—honor again compels him to be the savior of his people by offering his own life in atonement.

The fourth scene presents the historic act of surrender at the Portage. Miss Richards inadvertently lays the scene at Fort Winnebago, which was not built until a year later. She also introduces among her characters Major David E. Twiggs, who only came in 1828 to build Fort Winnebago, and Sutler Henry E. Merrell, whose advent was in 1834. Such slight historical anachronisms may be condoned by poetical license. It is less excusable, perhaps, to represent the well-known Indian trader, "Colonel" Childs, as a regular army officer. The play does justice, however, to the noble character of the chief actor and is a notable tribute to this son of Wisconsin.

The Historical Landmarks Committee of the State Historical Society unveiled at Blue Mounds on Labor Day a bronze tablet bearing the following inscription: "Site of Blue Mounds Fort. Built in May, 1832, by the miners and settlers of the neighborhood and garrisoned by them as volunteer members of General Henry Dodge's Iowa-Michigan brigade from May 20 to September 20, 1832, during the Black Hawk War. This site was donated to the State Historical Society of Wisconsin by the heirs of Colonel Ebenezer Brigham, pioneer settler of Blue Mounds, who helped build the fort. Dedicated September 5, 1921, by the State Historical Society of Wisconsin."

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Mrs. Theodora W. Youmans ("How Wisconsin Women Won the Ballot") is a resident of Waukesha and an active worker for the cause of civic betterment in Wisconsin.

William W. Bartlett ("Jean Brunet, Chippewa Valley Pioneer") is a resident of Eau Claire and a notable deliver in the field of Chippewa Valley history.

M. M. Quaife ("Wisconsin's First Literary Magazine") is the editor of the Wisconsin State Historical Society.

William A. Titus ("Historic Spots in Wisconsin: VII Ceresco, A Pioneer Communist Settlement") resides at Fond du Lac. He has contributed numerous articles to the columns of this magazine.

SOME WISCONSIN PUBLIC DOCUMENTS

Why We Study History is the suggestive title of a pamphlet prepared for the University Extension Division by Professor Carl Russell Fish. Professor Fish discusses the changed position of the study of history both in educational systems and in public opinion. Exaggerated emphasis has been placed upon its utilitarian value. It has been supposed to teach patriotism, but if truthfully presented one must admit one's country is not always right; if regarded as a moral subject, what seems right does not always triumph. History is the experience of the

human race; its value to the race is the same as memory to the individual. Its one permanent value lies in the necessity of understanding the world we live in. The historical method is the best combination of scientific training and everyday utility. It presents the human element in environment. "If we succeed in knowing men of any other time or place than our own, we have strengthened our ability to deal with life as we see it about us."

Professor Fish has performed a service in clearing the atmosphere of fictitious values and in estimating the real advantages of the study of history.

Hosea W. Rood, patriotic instructor of the G. A. R., has issued *A Little Flag Book No. 3*. This contains an excellent account of the war eagle "Old Abe," as told by the person from whom he was purchased. A young Indian named Chief Sky took from a nest in a pine tree in Price County a baby eagle. Coming down the Flambeau, he stopped ten miles north of Chippewa Falls and sold his pet to Mrs. McCann for a little corn. As the eagle grew in the poultry yard he became troublesome and was sold at Eau Claire to Captain John E. Perkins, whose company became Company C of the Eighth Wisconsin Infantry. At Camp Randall the mascot was named "Old Abe," and the regiment became known as the Eagle Regiment. The bird was in thirty-eight battles and skirmishes; he knew every man in his own company. His conduct in battle is disputed, but the Confederates made several attempts to capture him. After the war he was presented to the state and kept in the capitol. He died from the effects of the fire of 1881. His body was stuffed and mounted, only to be burned in the fire of 1904.

A Memorial Day Annual has been issued by the State Department of Public Instruction each year since 1896, during which time we have participated in two wars. Much of the *Annual* for 1921 is devoted to the lessons of the last war. Colonel W. J. Anderson contributes "What the World War Revealed," the heroic spirit of service and sacrifice which proved superior to all other claims. Dr. Joseph Schafer writes on heroism. All heroism is personal; many such acts are not recorded because of the modesty of the hero.

The memorial address on the late Chief Justice Winslow, delivered May 3, 1921, before the supreme court by his former colleague, R. D. Marshall, is issued in pamphlet form. Judge Marshall in evaluating the character of Judge Winslow says, "While appreciating the reserve of his station, he was able to maintain it without effort to disguise that delightfully humorous, companionable, social side of his nature, which made him the peculiarly attractive figure he was." Of his work for the state in his great series of interpretative decisions Judge Marshall speaks in the highest terms as a conscientious service whose value will increase with time.

The biennial reports of the several state commissions furnish much valuable historical source material. That of the Department of Agriculture shows that 52.1 per cent of the state's population is engaged in this pursuit, with an investment of \$3,531,000,000. The report shows of what value the department has been in warding off losses and in adopting an aggressive policy looking toward complete eradication and control of animal and plant diseases. The Immigration Bureau also aids prospective settlers. Our crop statistics are the most reliable in the Union; the crops of 1919 set the highest record in our history. Wisconsin led all states in the production of corn per acre, in the amount of clover seed, canning peas, hemp, and cigar tobacco raised. It is also first in milk cows and in the number of silos. Four thousand more families settled on Wisconsin farms than in any other of the North Central states.

The Civil Service Commission believes that its work tends to education for public service and has become a permanent factor for good government.

The *Report* of the Railroad Commission is surcharged with material on interesting community services for the development of public utilities, the increasing of property, the care for public safety, the growth of water power, and the aid and utility of railroads.

The importance of our growing industries is emphasized both by the Industrial Commission's *Report*, and by a pamphlet issued by the State Board of Education on *Technical and Trade Training Through the Continuation School*. Mr. Fitzpatrick of the latter board gives a complete list of the larger industries as furnished the federal government by the War Survey of 1918. This pamphlet is a plea for special trade schools for specific industries, such as mining at Platteville, paper making at Appleton, etc. The Industrial Commission now has seven departments dealing with nearly every phase of the worker's interests: safety and sanitation, employment, woman and child labor, workmen's compensation, mediation and arbitration, and apprenticeship. In the latter department it coöperates with the State Board of Vocational Education. The history of this latter movement is sketched by Edward A. Fitzpatrick in Bulletin No. 4, Vol. III. The work begun in 1911 has grown with remarkable celerity, and promises to destroy illiteracy in Wisconsin and to furnish our adolescents with interest and enthusiasm for their daily work.

The *Report* of the Commissioners of State Lands shows that leases are being taken of public lands for meadows and pastures and on the northern lakes for hunting and fishing lodges. Five hundred thousand dollars' worth of the old school certificates has been retired and added to the school funds. All this has been reinvested in loans to school districts and municipalities; the process is to be continued until \$1,000,000 has been retired. The commissioners ask for a law granting quit claim deeds to the holders of the Fox-Wisconsin Improvement lands.

Agricultural Experiment Station urges the farmers to "*Clear More Land*" in an important pamphlet setting out the methods and expenses. In Bulletin No. 323, *New Farm Facts*, they give the results of recent studies on new feeds and new proportions of feed for animals, the need of vitamins in human and animal food, etc.

The *Annual Report* of the Agricultural Extension Service of the University, by Dean H. L. Russell and K. L. Hatch, with the other specialists of the department, reviews the agricultural progress of Wisconsin for the last thirty years and is a most valuable contribution to our recent history.